Hello,

I've been using computers for a number of years as a source of income. I'm a graphic artist by trade. Since computers are my livelihood, I have a keen interest in all things related to this field. I have been following the Microsoft trail, and I keep noticing that certain facts never get brought up. So here is my take on how Microsoft runs it's business.

One of the most obvious things they did to try and kill competition in a field is with web browsers. Microsoft was late to the game, and was worried that Netscape would make the Windows operating system less important by using Sun's Java for browser based applications. Microsoft did not have a web browser of their own, so they did what they always do, they bought one. Or more precisely they stole one! They went to Spyglass and made a proposition to license the Mosaic browser. The deal was that Spyglass would get a percentage of every browser sold. But then Microsoft gave it away for free! This way, no money to Spyglass, and who wants to pay $35 for Netscape when you can have a browser for free? Interestingly, Mosaic was the original version of Netscape. The analogy here is what if Coca Cola opened their own chain of supermarkets. With every purchase you got a free six pack of Coke. A lot of people would take the free Coke, even if they might prefer Pepsi.

Another one. I use an Apple Macintosh computer, and not a PC running Microsoft Windows. Windows is obviously a copy of Apple's OS and NeXT Step from NeXT Computer. Apple's new OS is named "Mac OS X" ... Microsoft just announced their new OS... "Windows XP." Why the "X" in the name? I think this is to confuse consumers, who have been reading and hearing a lot of positive things about Mac OS X. In Apple's case, the X is the Roman numeral for the number 10, since this is version 10 of the Mac OS. In MS's case, it means nothing. It's really Windows 5, maybe. So why not "Windows V" then? Apple's new graphical interface is named "Aqua" because it has a shimmering liquid look, and a lot of blue. MS decided to name their new interface for Windows XP "Luna" because... well I don't know, except that it has four letters, ends in an "a" and sounds a bit like "Aqua." Plus all the reviews say Windows XP looks a lot like Mac OS X (which was out since March 2001). Once more, they can't make a better product, so they want to confuse consumers. it's a smoke screen to take the spotlight away from a competitor. They don't innovate as Bill Gates like to remind us so often. They merely copy and steal other's products, change them to their own design, and then drive the products that they copied out of the market. Why? To make a better product, or to have World Domination? This is the real question. As a consumer I know my choices are fewer because of Microsoft. I am writing this on Microsoft Outlook Express, because there

are so few choices of email programs for the Apple Macintosh. Being a much smaller market, it's just not worth it for companies to make a product that has to compete with a Big Company that gives away free software. Also it came bundled with the computer. So MS even has a hand in Apple's pie.

More... they made Windows XP so that the popular audio format, MP3, would not play back with high quality, unless you pay more money for an add-on. This is to make their own Windows Media Player the standard format, and thus giving them undue control over the market place. If they get their way Windows Media Player will become ubiquitous. Forget MP3, and Real Audio, and QuickTime. Every one will have to license the MS format. This is the same thing they tried to do with Java. Add so much of their own proprietary code as to wrestle the control away from Sun, and make their version the standard.

And with them bundling all this stuff... who needs to spend money buying a word processor, when your new PC have MS Office, and everything else you need. True, you might like Word, but maybe not. And removing this software might be very hard. Just look at trying to remove MS Internet Explorer from Windows. I think the DOJ needs to look at a company like Apple Computer, to see the way it should be done. Every program can be removed by just dragging the folder to the trash. And Macs don't come with a lot of software... because Apple wants their developers to make money too!

What I think needs to be done is to make MS release the code and API "hooks" that software developers need to make their products work better with Windows. The way it is now, for instance, parts of MS Office and Internet Explorer are built into the operating system. This makes MS' own products run better then the competition, and I feel gives them an unfair advantage. They claim this is "innovation," and if this is true, let others use it too. Since MS does not have competition in the PC operating system market, what difference would it make to let another company's web browser have full access to the guts of the OS, and it's build in HTML rendering engine. Since MS makes no money on Internet Explorer, and they don't have to worry about people buying a different OS, they have no excuse!

Thanks for the opportunity to speak my mind on the matter.

Yours truly

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